

REMARKS

Applicants have amended their claims in order to facilitate proceedings in connection with the above-identified application, so as to achieve earliest possible issuance of a U.S. patent based thereon. Specifically, Applicants have cancelled rejected claims 42-51 without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter thereof. By canceling claims 42-51, the only claims being rejected in the Office Action mailed January 5, 2004, it is respectfully submitted that the prior art rejections in Items 3, 6 and 7 on pages 2-6 of the Office Action mailed January 5, 2004, are moot, and no further discussion thereof is necessary.

The Examiner is thanked for the indicated allowance of claims 1-10, 16-22 and 34-41, in the Office Action mailed January 5, 2004.

The indication by the Examiner in the Office Action Summary of this Office Action mailed January 5, 2004, that claims 11-15 and 23-33 are withdrawn from consideration, is noted. To clarify the record, please note that claims 11-15 and 23-33 have previously been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer; note, for example, the Amendment filed September 8, 2003, in the above-identified application.

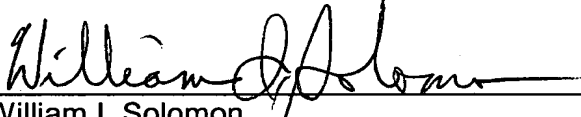
The Information Disclosure Statement submitted June 24, 2004, in the above-identified application, is noted. As indicated therein, submission of the Information Disclosure Statement on June 24, 2004, satisfied all applicable requirements of 37 CFR § 1.97 and § 1.98 with respect to the documents listed on the Form, substantially equivalent to Form PTO-1449, submitted with this Information Disclosure Statement. Consideration of the documents listed on this Form, upon further examination of the above-identified application, is respectfully requested.

In view of all of the foregoing, allowance of all claims remaining in the application, after consideration of the documents listed on the Form submitted with the Information Disclosure Statement filed June 24, 2004; and, subsequent thereto, passing of the above-identified application to issue in due course, are respectfully requested.

To the extent necessary, Applicants petition for an extension of time under 37 CFR § 1.136. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to the Deposit Account No. 01-2135 (Case No. 566.39787X00), and please credit any excess fees to such Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,

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